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ABSTRACT

This booklet examines the theory and practice of projects that involve secondary students in community services. Through such involvement, young people will develop positive attitudes toward community participation that will persist throughout their adult lives. Community service projects represent an important and exciting way to bring democracy to life for young people and to demonstrate to them that they can solve problems and make vital contributions to improving the quality of life in their communities. The booklet begins by discussing the place of community service in the school program. The rationale and objectives of a school citizenship program and criteria for community service projects are discussed. Some existing community projects involving secondary students are then described. Practical matters involved in developing community service programs are discussed. These include identifying community needs, defining personnel roles, scheduling and time considerations, financial considerations, and project planning. The last two sections discuss evaluation of projects and the future with regard to community service education. The booklet concludes with a bibliography. (RM)

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Community Service Projects: Citizenship in Action

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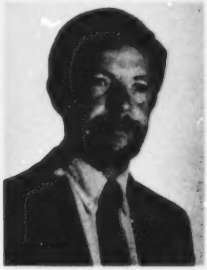

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Community Service Projects: Citizenship in Action

by
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Introduction

In a small town they conducted tests of well water, which led to approval of a new waterworks system. In a large city they carried out a door-to-door voter registration campaign. In a suburb they built a town park with recreational facilities for young children. Who are *they*? They are adolescents, secondary school students participating in projects to improve the quality of life in their local communities. Their efforts are duplicated in hundreds of communities. The faces may change and the names of the towns may be different, but the script remains the same. Sponsored by educators who believe in learning through experience, secondary school students become engaged in a variety of practical community service projects as part of their ongoing curriculum. They apply many of the skills and concepts learned in school; they develop new skills in planning and participation; they gain insight into the process of democratic living; and they contribute tangible improvements to their own communities. Through such involvement, these young people will develop positive attitudes toward community participation that will persist throughout their adult lives.

Regardless of whatever fad currently preoccupies educators, developing the attitudes and skills for democratic living continues as one of the major goals of education. Just reading and talking about them is not enough. To learn, to really learn, the whys and hows of citizenship requires real and active experience. We believe that community service projects represent an important and exciting way to bring democracy to life for young people and to demon-

strate to them that they can solve problems and make vital contributions to improving the quality of life in their towns and cities.

In this fastback we shall examine both the theory and practice of community service projects in the hope that educators will adopt this exciting approach to learning and living.

The Place of Community Service in the School Program

School-sponsored community service projects are not a new idea by any means. In fact, descriptions of such projects have been reported in professional literature throughout this century, but they have never enjoyed widespread popularity in the schools. However, recently several states and local school districts have considered requiring students to engage in some kind of community service during their school careers. Ernest Boyer, in his book *High School* (1983), strongly recommends the same requirement. It will be helpful at this point to review the philosophical premises underlying community service.

Consistently mentioned in statements of educational purpose is the goal of helping young people develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with effective citizenship, because effective citizens are the foundation of a democratic society. There are many definitions of the "effective citizen," but most include these common characteristics:

1. The effective citizen is aware of problems and needs in the community, state, nation, and world.
2. The effective citizen understands the rights and responsibilities of the individual in a society.
3. The effective citizen participates in activities that improve the welfare of others and of society in general.
4. The effective citizen possesses the skills needed to improve the general quality of life in society.

5. The effective citizen understands and participates in the political and legal processes that improve the general quality of life in society.

The compelling issue for schools is one of designing and implementing a curriculum that will help young people acquire the general characteristics of the "effective citizen."

The School Citizenship Program

The curriculum offers many opportunities for developing various aspects of citizenship. One way is providing information about citizenship as a concept and about persons who have demonstrated effective citizenship. At this level learners study the organization and process of government in the community, state, nation, and world. They also learn, through biographies and interviews, about people who have made significant contributions to their community, state, and nation. A second way is providing opportunities to see citizenship in action through field trips to local, state, and federal government offices, to courts at various jurisdictional levels, and to social agencies. A third way is through direct experiences within the school, such as classroom projects, student government, and school service clubs where students can learn and apply the skills of citizenship. A fourth way, which is the focus of this fastback, is extending the active participation beyond the school into the community, where students carry out service projects such as working as volunteers in nursing homes, day-care centers, recreation programs, health service agencies, counseling programs, halfway houses, and the like.

Each of the four methods just described has a legitimate place in the citizenship education program. Together they offer both knowledge and skill application in citizenship. However, in too many schools citizenship education has been limited to requiring the first method of all students, offering the second to some, and involving a few in the third. The provision of broad-based community service projects has received only limited acceptance in the schools. This is unfortunate because it is the method that offers the best opportunities for applying citizenship skills in real-life settings and for serving real community needs. The other three methods, while useful, can provide only vicarious experiences. The concepts and skills from these vicarious experiences initiated in school need to be extended into practice in the outside world.

There is another reason for school-sponsored community service projects. Since the community provides financial and other kinds of support to the school, so should the school contribute to the ongoing life of the community. Too often school-community relations consist of little more than slick public relations efforts designed to "sell" the school to citizens. If the school is an integral part of the community, then there is no need for gimmicks to justify its existence. Community service projects are one means to make the school responsive to community needs and to contribute to its improvement. What better public relations program could there be than visible evidence that the school is making such a contribution? What better way to integrate the school and community than through such service?

School-sponsored community service projects promote the following goals of citizenship education:

1. To develop and apply such participation skills as planning and cooperation,
2. To become aware of community problems and needs,
3. To develop a sense of self-worth through personal contributions to community life,
4. To develop a sense of personal responsibility for the quality of life,
5. To gain insight into other people's lives through interacting with citizens of various backgrounds and of different ages, and
6. To develop a positive disposition toward active community participation and service that will carry over into adult life.

In order to promote these goals, community service projects must involve students directly in actual improvement projects in the community and provide time for them to reflect on the meaning of those direct experiences through discussions, journal writing, and other in-school activities. This blend of theory and practice, thought and action, provides for both the cognitive and affective dimensions of authentic learning. Without reflection, activities may be no more than random busywork to occupy students' time. Without direct experience, reflection is merely a hypothetical exercise, lacking a test in reality.

In terms of curriculum organization, community service projects are closely related to the problems-of-living approach in social studies, where students undertake unit studies on such topics as "How Technology Affects Our Lives," "Conservation of Natural Resources," "World Peace," or "Living in Our Com-

munity." Such units give students an opportunity to identify and study problems and to consider how they might be resolved. Community service projects fall naturally within this approach. In addition, community service projects can strengthen and enliven other subject areas. A project related to environmental problems may apply information learned in science courses. In conducting a citizen survey, students use mathematics in tabulating and presenting their findings. In publishing a school-community newsletter students use English/language arts skills for interviewing, recording, and writing.

Service projects also may be used to address personal-social purposes to help students develop their human-relations skills, their sensitivity to the needs and problems of others, and their sense of self-worth. In short, community service projects have a legitimate place in the school program for virtually any aspect of the curriculum.

Criteria for Community Service Projects

Our discussion to this point has focused on the curriculum strands that run through community service projects. With these in mind, let us now consider the criteria for conducting projects that are educationally sound.

1. Ideally, projects should arise from real community needs. Such needs may be identified by any individual or group in the school or community. In terms of motivation it is better if students themselves identify possible projects; but they may be initiated by teachers, administrators, counselors, or by citizens or representatives of local agencies.

2. Participation in projects should be voluntary, but in some cases a class or a small group may be assigned a project, when it is an integral part of a course.

3. Regardless of whether the project is a simple activity (cleaning up at a local park) or a complex one (designing and conducting a citizen survey or organizing a peer counseling program), school officials must be certain that it is legitimate service learning and not a source of cheap labor.

4. Most community service projects are carried out at the high school level, but there is no reason why elementary and middle school students cannot be involved. The service learning goals of improving self-worth, social growth, and the skills of citizenship are of benefit to any age group.

5. Projects may be undertaken by individuals or by groups, depending on the complexity of the project and the readiness of the learners. However, with individual projects, participants should have planned times when they can meet in groups to reflect on their experiences.

6. Projects may be of varying duration, ranging from a few days to two or more years. To be of real benefit, however, they should involve sufficient time to allow in-depth planning, implementation, and reflection.

Service projects take many patterns and forms. In the next section are descriptions of community service projects in various communities over the years.

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Community Service in Action

In Pulaski, Wisconsin, high school students tested the water in local wells, which created an awareness for the need to construct new water and sewer lines in their community. Agriculture classes tested milk for the farmers and developed a cooperative cannery. High school journalism and English classes wrote and published the community newspaper. Social studies classes conducted land-use surveys, which led to the building of a local industrial complex, thus attracting new industry to the community. Industrial arts classes constructed homes when the community faced a housing shortage.

In Floodwood, Minnesota, 45 miles northwest of Duluth, students, teachers, and community members worked together on such projects as a cooperative creamery, a dairy improvement project, and a community fair. Students from agriculture classes visited local farms and disseminated new knowledge about farming to improve farm practices and production in their community. A unique project was the Floodwood School Forest Program in which the entire school-community population worked together to develop a forest area on 109 acres purchased by the school district. Seventh-grade students removed seeds from cones to raise seedlings, which they subsequently planted. When the school hockey team needed wooden side rails for their skating rink, the students along with community members set up a logging operation to provide the lumber for the side rails (Harris and Harris 1983).

In Petersburg, West Virginia, an eighth-grade class developed a community health project. Soon, the entire school population of 565 students became involved in the project. Students and their teachers began investigating all aspects of community health and identified needed improvements in the areas

of garbage disposal, insect and pest control, sewage disposal, water supply, food handling, and public parks and recreation. Student involvement in these activities provided "hands on" learning experiences that went far beyond the curriculum offered in conventional classrooms.

In Portland, Oregon, an identified problem was high school students' lack of knowledge about occupations and how to apply for a job. The solution was a program called "Portland's 600 Dutch Uncles." With the cooperation of local businesses, students were turned loose in the community to seek information about jobs, what they required, and how to interview for them. Evaluation of this program revealed that it was highly successful and mutually beneficial for both local businesses and students.

The Community School Service Program, instituted and financed by the Kellogg Foundation in such Michigan communities as Mesick, Stephenson, and Concord, is another example of how, through the efforts of the community and the school, improvements were made in farm practices, recreation, and community health.

Not all community-based programs are found in rural school districts. In many cities where social and economic problems are overwhelming, school-community programs are being successfully implemented; and young people are leading the way. In Indianapolis high school students participate in community service projects that are designed to acquaint them with career options in the health fields.

In Central Falls, Rhode Island, a program called Channel One encourages youth participation in community affairs. Students can be found working on restoration and beautification projects and fund-raising endeavors.

Project "Discovery" in the South Bronx, New York City, uses community service as a method of teaching. In a social studies unit called "Is the self-help ethic alive and well in the South Bronx?" students worked with a local community group on urban redevelopment projects, including raising fish and gardening. Students all participated in a variety of community service projects, such as volunteer work in hospitals, nursing homes, day-care centers, churches, and park programs; tutoring and counseling younger students; painting murals; and assisting with such special events as neighborhood folk festivals.

In Cincinnati, students known as "Ombuds" counsel other students in such areas as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse, legal assistance, and other problems facing young people today. These Ombuds are trained in grievance processes,

problem solving, juvenile justice, and human relations. Programs such as the Ombuds contribute to overall improvement in community mental health.

In Baltimore, students and teachers at Patterson High School developed "civic experience" classes. Students in these classes spend two hours per week in volunteer service with community agencies and organizations. One group of students conducted a neighborhood survey to identify the needs of the elderly. Another group of students conducted a housing survey for the Baltimore Housing Authority.

When Bradford, Pennsylvania, was investigating various forms of city government, students became involved through their social studies classes. Students studied various forms of city government and made recommendations to local government officials. These students provided a valuable service to their community and learned a great deal about city government while they were doing it.

New York City has a Partner Service Learning program for senior citizens who wish to tutor students. Here, older people find a renewed purpose for living and, in the process, are establishing communication links across the generations.

In Albion, Michigan, and Columbus, Ohio, troubled teenagers are learning more about themselves through serving others. These service learning programs include chopping firewood for the disabled, working with retarded children, and visiting shut-in senior citizens. The responsibility involved in helping others provides many of these troubled youth with a renewed sense of self-worth.

In Shoreham, New York, the Shoreham-Wading River Middle School has developed a program that involves students in community service projects for about one hour per week. Students help out in day-care centers, nursing homes, and in classes for handicapped students. One student helped a victim of a car accident with his physical therapy exercises.

One of the largest school-community service projects ever undertaken is the Children for Children program in New York City, where 920,000 children raised money to help feed starving Ethiopians with bake sales, bottle redemptions, car washes, book sales, and other efforts.

From the examples cited, it becomes clear that participation in community service projects broadens students' horizons and exposes them to information and experiences not available in the conventional classroom. The activities these students were engaged in dealt with real problems with genuine significance in their communities.

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Organizing Community Service Projects

The community service projects described in the previous section could not have been implemented without a great deal of planning and coordination. In this section we shall discuss some of the practical matters involved in developing community service programs, including identifying community needs, defining project personnel roles, scheduling, financing, and project planning.

Identifying Community Needs

School-sponsored community service programs should be based on a real need. One way of identifying such needs is through a community needs assessment. Data from community surveys reflect citizens' perceptions of needs and identify questions about the quality of living in the community. Carried out on a yearly basis, needs assessments provide a continuing record of community attitudes. In fact, conducting a needs assessment survey can itself be a community service project. Students can help design the survey, conduct interviews or mailings, tabulate and publicize results, and present recommendations to community agencies.

A second way for identifying needs is through requests from individuals or agencies in the community. For example, the city planning commission in Bradford, Pennsylvania, requested the school's assistance in planning the future of their community. As a result, students were involved in a series of projects over several years, including land-use surveys, business projections, and other areas.

A third way of identifying needs can come from the school itself. Students, teachers, or administrators may perceive a need in the community and initiate a project to deal with it. For example, some 30 years ago students and teachers in social studies classes in one Baltimore school became concerned with low turnout at elections and subsequently conducted a voter registration drive throughout the city. With service projects identified by school representatives, some effort may have to be made to create awareness of the need among citizens or local officials. Otherwise, they may question the time, energy, and finances required to carry out the service project.

If the school district has a community advisory council, it can be helpful in identifying community needs and in facilitating service projects. If there is a school community-relations coordinator, this person can serve as a clearinghouse through which service projects may be sponsored.

Defining Personnel Roles in the Community Service Program

As with any school program, it is important that the persons involved in service projects have clearly defined roles. The role of students is one of learners voluntarily engaging in projects that contribute to their education and their communities. They are not experts in the area a project involves. They may make mistakes, but the key to learning is finding ways to avoid those mistakes the next time. Projects should not use students as cheap labor for menial tasks such as assigning elementary school classes to clean under the bleachers after high school football games. This is a demeaning task for young people; and it is certainly not an example of the kind of educative experience implied by community service.

The role of teachers is crucial for the success of community service projects. First, they assist students in clarifying the purpose of the project. Second, they plan the activities related to the project and acquire the resources to support it. Third, they guide students in reflective thinking related to the project through discussion, journal writing, development of recommendations, and so on. Fourth, they help students to evaluate the project in terms of personal growth and overall effectiveness. For the duration of the project, the teacher acts as facilitator and guide, concentrating on the educative aspects.

The administrator's role is one of facilitation. The principal, community-relations director, or other designated leader is responsible for maintaining

communication with community groups associated with service projects, managing schedules and transportation, securing funds, and other administrative details. A more general role of administrators, and an important one, is being a "missionary" who promotes the community service concept and educates others as to its place in the curriculum. Further, when projects encounter the rough spots (and they usually do), the administrator must remind others that the process of learning is rarely smooth.

Still another role falls to those members of the community who work with students on specific projects. These adults must be encouraging and supportive of the students' efforts. They must serve as models of responsible adult behavior. What they say and how they say it, when interacting with students, is a kind of teaching about adulthood. Those responsible for the service project should meet in the early planning stages to explain and to clarify the roles of those citizens who will be working with students.

Scheduling and Time Considerations

In considering community service projects, a first concern is the amount of time involved in carrying out the project. A second is providing time in the school schedule for project activities. The duration of projects will vary depending on their purpose. Some projects are relatively brief. For example, students and teachers in the Morris (New York) School District schedule a series of events carried out on the two days before their Christmas holidays, including a dinner to which all the elderly in the community are invited and home deliveries are made to those citizens unable to attend. Other projects may involve several weeks or a semester, such as tutoring programs, local environmental projects, and citizen surveys. Still others may be carried out over a period of several years. The Bradford, Pennsylvania, city planning project involved several groups of students over a period of five years.

When planning community service projects, take into consideration the maturity and experience of students involved. For first-time project participants or for those with limited interest, it is probably better to start with projects of short duration. Experienced project participants or those with a deep interest in a problem can take on projects of longer duration that require greater effort.

Scheduling project activities is a problem when the school day is already filled to capacity with a variety of programs. The planning, reflective, and evaluative phases of projects usually can be scheduled by teachers during regular classes or carried out over lunch and during study halls or other noninstructional times. The major problem is scheduling activities that take the students outside the school. Some project activities can be conducted during regular class time. For example, time in a mathematics class can be used to tabulate and analyze data from a community survey. Self-contained and block-time classes provide more flexibility for teachers and students to set aside time for activities. Scheduling arrangements can be made to cluster study halls, lunch periods, and activity periods for students engaged in service projects. Or service projects may require out-of-school time in afternoons, evenings, or weekends. However, keep in mind the voluntary nature of service projects; students must be strongly motivated if they are to spend their free time on them. The experience of schools that are truly committed to the concept of service projects indicates that supportive scheduling is indeed possible.

Financial Considerations

Conducting community service projects usually involves some costs. The ideal situation is to establish a regular line item in the school budget for funding various aspects of projects. Where this is not possible, perhaps discretionary funds within the instructional budget can be used, since projects are clearly part of the educational program. Another alternative is seeking funds from outside agencies interested in community development. (See fastback 200 *Mini-Grants for Classroom Teachers*.) Such foundations as Kellogg and Mott have a primary interest in this area. Sources of information about external funding include the regular grant registers and the National Center for Service Learning located in Washington, D.C. This center also provides literature and technical assistance in the development of youth participation projects.

Costs involved in community service programs will vary depending on the scope and activities of projects. Small-scale projects, such as a community survey, involve minimal costs for supplies, mailing, and the like. Large-scale projects, such as a community-based peer counseling program, may involve larger costs including rental of space, although even this may be donated by an interested citizen. Some projects take students into the community, so trans-

portation costs may also be a factor. In small districts students may be able to walk to project sites. In larger communities school cars or buses and public transportation might have to be considered. Here, school officials should seek support from community agencies. In one major city, the public transportation system provides free transportation on regular buses to students engaged in service projects.

The other major cost factor is insurance. Since projects are often off school grounds, additional insurance may be necessary. One option is to include coverage in the general student insurance program in the same way that off-campus athletic events and other extracurricular activities are handled. A second option is to arrange for short-term coverage for specific students involved in particular projects. The latter is often cheaper than the former. Some districts use a parent permission form that includes a statement releasing the school from liability when students are off school grounds for service projects. However, parent permission forms do not make school authorities immune from charges of negligence in a court of law. Whatever the case, school officials should consult local insurance agencies in the initial stages of planning for community service projects.

As with scheduling, ways can be found to finance service projects if the school district is truly committed to the concept. Resourceful educators in many districts have found ways to implement successfully community service projects.

Project Planning

Community service projects must be planned just as carefully as other aspects of the curriculum. In planning, consideration should be given to the following:

1. For each project one school professional should be identified as the "teacher." This may be a regular teacher working with students in his or her own class, or a counselor, administrator, or teacher with special expertise identified as appropriate to work with an individual or small group for a particular project.
2. The project proposal should be developed with the students and include the following elements: a statement of need, a statement of what the project is to accomplish and what the students are supposed to learn, a description of both direct and reflective activities, a list of

needed resources, a timeline or schedule for participation, and suggestions for evaluation.

3. Careful consideration should be given to the characteristics of students to be involved in the project, including their maturity, previous experience with community service, interest level, and skill development with regard to project requirements.
4. Information about the project should be given to parents and their permission obtained in cases where students will leave the school grounds.
5. All persons involved in the project (teachers, students, and community representatives) should meet to review plans and make certain they are understood and agreed on.
6. A decision should be made about granting school credit related to the project. In some cases, none may be involved. In others, credit may be included in regular coursework or granted as a separate area designated as community service. In districts where a community service experience is required, granting credit is certainly justified.

If these six items are considered in the planning process along with clear role definitions, ongoing school-community communications, flexible scheduling, and adequate financing, the chances for a successful community service project will be enhanced. Once implemented, the next important question is how can we know if the project was really successful. The next section discusses issues related to evaluation of community service projects.

Evaluation of Community Service Projects

Educators working with community service projects must be open to and comfortable with the processes of evaluation. Through evaluation, educators can incorporate refinements while the projects are still going on, and ultimately they can determine whether the goals of the project have been realized. However, their effectiveness in undertaking these tasks will depend on the quality and quantity of the data available to them. How and when to collect useable data will be addressed in detail later in this section.

Evaluation should involve a partnership of the educators responsible for administration and conduct of the project, the students involved in the project, and the community members being served by the project. This partnership gives students and community members a sense of ownership in the evaluation process. It ensures that the evaluation techniques are understood by the students and community members. And it fosters a climate of acceptance for any refinements or changes that may be necessary in the operation of the project.

Planning for evaluation should begin at the inception of the project. This ensures the systematic collection of data that will be useful in making both ongoing and summative judgments about the effectiveness of the project. Out of the process of writing objectives, activities, and procedures will come the questions that serve as the basis for the evaluation. Thinking about evaluation from day one forces us to ask the "why," "what if," and "how come" questions during the development and implementation of the project.

The following questions can serve as a guide in planning for evaluation:

1. *Have you written clear statements of the goals and objectives of the project?*

The goals of a project set the context and describe the clientele of the project. They give focus to the project. Objectives are more specific statements of feasible and measurable accomplishments for the project. Many community service projects provide a wider range of learner outcomes than does traditional classroom instruction. Olsen (1954) has suggested a useful set of criteria for evaluating community service projects.

1. Is the project related to the current living experiences of students?
2. Do the activities contribute to the development of needed skills, habits, and ideals?
3. Do the activities promote critical thinking?
4. Is the project appropriate for the maturity level of the students?
5. Do the activities provide for differences in abilities and interests?
6. Do students share in planning and evaluating the program?
7. Do the activities promote a desire to participate actively in community life?
8. Does the project stimulate awareness of the need for improved human relations?
9. Does the project cultivate a disposition to act for the general welfare of the community?
10. Does the project permit students to assume realistic citizenship responsibilities?
11. Does the project acquaint students with the resources of their community?
12. Does the project deal with real problems of community life?
13. Does the project offer opportunity to analyze conflicts as well as cooperation between individuals and groups in the community?
14. Can the project actually improve the quality of community living?

2. *Have you stated the reasons for the evaluation?*

The results of the evaluation will be used by different persons for different reasons. The partnership of teachers, students, and community members may need ongoing results for refining or redirecting the project. Teachers may need results in order to conform to the grading policies of the school district. Administrators may need results to determine whether additional funds need to be included in future school budgets, or for writing a proposal seeking grant monies for continued operation.

3. *Have you identified the measures you will use to judge progress toward project goals and objectives?*

The measures used will depend on the objectives of the project, the purposes of the evaluation, and the kinds of information needed by various individuals involved with the project. One set of measures may be used for collecting statistical data, for example, number of students involved, number of hours per week contributed by students, number of community members served, or amount of funds needed to run the project. A second set of measures would be those used to determine outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes of both students and community members involved in the project.

4. *Have you designed a plan for conducting the evaluation?*

Once the goals and objectives have been written, the reasons for the evaluation stated, and the types of needed information determined, it is necessary to develop an evaluation plan. Some plans compare the stated outcomes with the actual outcomes of the project. Other plans utilize a before-and-after format; data are collected before the start of the project and compared to the same sorts of data collected at the end of the project. Still another plan uses a control group where data on project participants are compared to data collected from a control group of teachers, students, and community members who were not involved in the project. Which evaluation plan you choose will depend on:

1. Feasibility: Can it be done; are the data and time available to use a particular plan?
2. Utility: Will the plan address the needs and concerns of all the participants; will it yield useable data for short-term and long-term decisions?
3. Cost: Do adequate time, staff, and resources exist to carry out the plan?

5. *Have you selected the appropriate instruments to secure the necessary data?*

Secondary sources for these data are student logs, school board records, and newspaper accounts of projects. A better method is gathering data directly from project participants and clients through personal or telephone interviews, questionnaires, and locally prepared tests of knowledge and skills. In addition, observation can be used to assess attitudinal objectives of the project.

6. *Have you considered how you will compile and analyze the data?*

Data should be compiled in a form that helps those who need the data for the purposes of making decisions. Brevity and readability are important.

Statistical data should be displayed so as to clarify the relationships between measures and objectives.

Evaluating community service projects is necessary to refine project goals and objectives and to determine the effectiveness of individual projects. Evaluation should begin at the inception of the project and be carried out systematically. Any community service project worth doing is worth evaluating well.

The Future for Community Service Education

General public support exists for the concept of school-sponsored service projects. The 1984 Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools asked the following question:

> A plan has been suggested to enable all juniors and seniors in high school to perform some kind of community service for course credit – such as working in a hospital or recreation center, beautifying parks, or helping law enforcement officers. Would you like to have such a plan adopted in this community, or not?

The response was 79% in favor of such a plan (*Phi Delta Kappan*, September 1984). Why, then, don't more schools undertake this type of effort? What are the impediments to the implementation of the community service education concept?

One impediment is the rigidity of school schedules. If we think about instructional minutes per school year rather than instructional minutes per day or per week, we can avoid the slavish devotion to 50-minute periods each day, five days a week. The scheduling of teacher and pupil time should depend on the significance of the learning activities and not on putting in a specified number of minutes in each curriculum area. Another impediment is overworked staff and administration, who frequently are asked to do more without any provision of time for planning. Community service projects require time and energy for planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating a wide spectrum of activities inside and outside the physical school setting. Released time during the school year for inservice sessions along with paid

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work days prior to and after the school year can do much to nourish enthusiasm for community service education.

In the community an impediment may be a misunderstanding about the school's role in sponsoring community service projects. With calls for "back to basics" and "more discipline," the public may be confused when asked to support community service education. Proponents of community service will need to educate community members about the approach and show how it contributes to the basics and discipline.

In this fastback we have described the benchmarks of what school community service programs should look like and have pointed out the factors that inhibit their implementation. It is our wish that the new surge of interest in community service projects will give them their proper place in the priorities of curriculum thinking.